REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks. No additional fee is required for this Amendment as the number of independent claims has decreased, and the total number of claims has decreased. This Amendment is filed with a Petition for Extension of Time and the Petition fee.

Request for Telephone Interview

Applicant kindly requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned to schedule a telephone interview, to discuss the merits of this Patent Application.

Amendment to the Claims

Applicant has amended Claim 10 to further clarify the claimed invention and include limitations from canceled dependent Claim 6. Support for this Amendment can be found throughout Applicant's Specification.

Applicant has amended dependent Claims 2, 3, and 9 for consistency in view of amended independent Claim 10.

No new matter has been added to the claims by this Amendment.

Election/Restrictions

Claims 13-23 were withdrawn by the Examiner. Applicant has thus canceled Claims 13-23.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 2, 3, 6, 8-10, and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the art discussed in Applicant's Specification in view of Bennett et al., U.S. Patent 3,554,834, and Kitahiro, JP 55-2020.

The Bennett et al. Patent discloses a method of applying a decal to a concave surface of an article (Abstract). The decal is held by vacuum on a first member 19 and transported to a second member 16 which holds the concave article in a cavity 17 (Col. 3, lines 37-56). The decal is disposed against an annular rim 18 of the second member 16 to hold the decal between the first and second members (Col. 3, lines 65-74). The vacuum is stopped and negative vacuum pressure is applied from underneath the decal through a passage 22 in the second member cavity 17, thereby pulling the decal against the concave surface of the article (Col. 4, lines 1-40).

The Kitahiro Abstract discloses a method of bonding a flexible film, such as a filter 13, onto an image sensor 12. The filter is held to a hollow cylinder

14 by vacuum through silts 15 and applied to the image sensor starting at the filter center through pressure within the cylinder 14.

Applicant has amended independent Claim 10 to recite a method for applying a planar semiconductor wafer to a planar assembly carrier with a protective layer. Neither the Bennett et al. Patent nor the Kitahiro Abstract disclose or suggest applying a semiconductor wafer. One skilled in the art of semiconductor technology would not look to the non-analogous fields of decal application (the Bennett et al. Patent) nor the field of optics and light filters (the Kitahiro Abstract) for methods on applying planar semiconductor wafers to planar protective surfaces.

In addition, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner is using improper hindsight in combining the art discussed in the Specification with the cited references. The Examiner acknowledges the discussed art is silent as to arching a semiconductor wafer for application to a planar protective layer. The only way that the Examiner could have arrived at Applicant's claimed invention from the art relied upon, was to use Applicant's claims as a starting point and rely on 100% hindsight. The Examiner looked at Applicant's claims alone as a starting point or "template" for the invention, instead of starting from the position of a person skilled in the art having no prior knowledge of the invention. Having gleaned an understanding of the invention from Applicant's claims, she worked backwards into the prior art, picking

and choosing an element here, and another element there, from unrelated prior art references. The Examiner has made no showing of how a person in the very specialized field of semiconductor technology, having no prior knowledge of the invention, could have arrived at the invention using the known prior art as a starting point.

In addition, the Bennett et al. Patent discloses applying a decal to a concave surface not a planar surface as in Applicant's claimed invention. As discussed above the Bennett et al. Patent discloses pinching the ends of the decal between two support members and then applying vacuum pressure from underneath the decal to pull the decal into a cavity. The method of the Bennett et al. Patent can be used to apply a decal only to a concave surface, and not to a planar surface as in Applicant's clamed invention. There is no disclosure or suggestion in the Bennett et al. Patent how to apply the disclosed apparatus and method to a planar surface. The teachings of the Bennett et al. Patent are not combinable with the prior art discussed in the Specification to form Applicant's claimed invention.

Amended Claim 10 also recites a planar portion for carrying the wafer. The planar portion provides support for carrying a delicate semiconductor wafer. The hollow cylinder 14 of the Kitahiro Abstract does not provide any such support. One

skilled in the semiconductor art would recognize how the semiconductor wafer could be easily damaged by using the method of the Kitahiro Abstract.

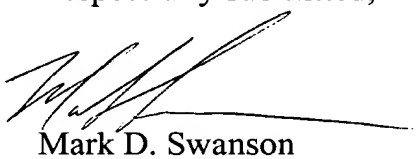
For at least the above reasons, Applicant's amended Claim 10 is patentable over the prior art relied upon by the Examiner. Claims 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 12 depend from amended Claim 10 and are thus patentable for at least the same reasons as amended Claim 10.

Conclusion

Applicant intends to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicant has not addressed in this response, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

Applicant sincerely believes that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully requests early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark D. Swanson
Regis. No. 48,498

Pauley Petersen & Erickson
2800 West Higgins Road, Suite 365
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60195
(847) 490-1400 FAX (847) 490-1403